

Government of the Northwest Territories

Amended Corporate COVID-19 Vaccination Policy Guidelines Effective April 1, 2022

PURPOSE

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) Corporate COVID-19 Vaccination Guidelines (Guidelines) have been updated to reflect the ending of the Public Health Emergency in the Northwest Territories by the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer of the Northwest Territories.

These Guidelines are intended to provide the necessary information and direction to departments, agencies, and employees of the GNWT about the application of the Amended GNWT COVID-19 Vaccination Policy (Policy) and its requirements beginning April 1, 2022.

POLICY BASE

These Guidelines are consistent with and support the implementation of the GNWT's Amended COVID-19 Vaccination Policy.

SCOPE

The Policy concerns vaccination against COVID-19, or Coronavirus disease, an infectious respiratory illness caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), and the implementation of workplace safety precautions.

The Policy and the accompanying Guidelines apply to GNWT employees of all Departments and Agencies excluding the NTHSSA, the Legislative Assembly, and the Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

DEFINITIONS

The following terms apply to the Policy:

COVID-19 – or Coronavirus disease is an infectious respiratory illness caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

Deputy Head – the Deputy Minister of a department, the Chief Executive Officer of a public committee, board or council, or such a person as may be appointed or designated as Deputy Head.

Employees – means all members of the public service as defined by the *Public Service Act*, except employees of the NTHSSA, the Legislative Assembly, and the Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

Contractors – means all persons engaged to provide services with or without remuneration on behalf of the GNWT.

Fully Vaccinated – for the purposes of this Policy, a person is considered Fully Vaccinated 14 days

after receiving the final dose of a Health Canada authorized COVID-19 vaccine or an approved combination of Health Canada authorized vaccines.

GUIDELINES

General

The GNWT is committed to protecting the safety of all members of society served by the GNWT and ensuring a safe working environment for our employees, contractors, and members of the public. The GNWT is also committed to ensuring that employees and contractors of the GNWT adhere to all auxiliary policies and regulations applicable to their positional duties.

Employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories

Beginning April 1, 2022, GNWT employees are no longer required to provide proof of vaccination or to adhere to enhanced PPE-use or COVID-19 testing requirements, except as may be required under departmental or workplace policies or safety practices.

Employees who are ill should not attend at their place of work. Employees who wish to continue to wear masks in shared or public spaces, to physically distance, or to meet virtually rather than in person are encouraged to do so. Managers should be respectful and accepting of these preferences and encourage employees to make decisions regarding these issues in a manner that is comfortable to them. Moreover, it is important that all staff remain respectful of the personal choices their colleagues may make in these matters.

Adherence to Auxiliary Policies and Regulations

Employees whose work duties require them to provide proof of vaccination due to federal regulation or for adherence to other vaccination policies may be required to provide proof of vaccination without opportunity for exemption to wear PPE or follow COVID-19 testing protocols to adhere to those policies.

Departments and agencies are responsible for identifying positions which require incumbent employees to be fully vaccinated and for notifying incumbents of those positions of their requirement to provide proof of vaccination. Those employees who do not comply with vaccination requirements may be subject to temporary leave without pay or discharge from duties as necessary for departments and agencies to meet operational requirements.

Proof of Vaccination Record and Information Storage

Employees who are required to submit proof of vaccination may do so using HRIS or as otherwise directed by their department or agency.

Acceptable proof of vaccination documentation must be an official record from the public health

office in the jurisdiction(s) where the Employee received the vaccine dose(s) and must include the following information which will be used to verify the Employee's vaccination status:

- i. The issuing authority of the vaccination record;
- ii. The Employee's full name;
- iii. The name/brand of the vaccine(s) received; and
- iv. The date(s) of vaccination.

Information submitted by Employees will be managed in a manner that is consistent with the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (ATIPPA)*.

[Use of and Access to Employee Information](#)

Employee information will only be accessed in circumstances deemed necessary by the GNWT.

In the event of any unauthorized access to Employee's vaccination information, the Employee will be immediately advised of the breach and the circumstances relating to that breach.

Employees may access their vaccination status information through HRIS

[Accommodations](#)

GNWT departments and agencies are subject to the Duty to Accommodate Injury and Disability Policy and the Duty to Accommodate Policy Application Guidelines.

Departmental and agency-specific guidelines must allow for accommodations to be made for employees who are unable to be vaccinated for medical reasons or based on protected grounds under the *Human Rights Act*. Departmental and agency-specific guidelines will include details about how Employees are able to seek accommodation.

[Medical Exemptions](#)

The Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, Hay River Health and Social Services Authority and Tlicho Community Services Agency released an Approach to Requests for Exemption from COVID-19, which provides guidance to support NWT healthcare providers in a consistent and evidence-based approach to vaccine exemption requests.

Employees requesting an accommodation due to a medical exemption to vaccination will be required to provide a letter from a physician or nurse practitioner or other certified proof of medical exemption from a physician or nurse practitioner to claim medical exemption status.

Requests for accommodation due to a medical or human rights exemption to COVID-19 vaccination should be made to respective departments and agencies as soon as is practicable.

The GNWT will work with affected Employees to meet the Employee's accommodation needs.

EMPLOYEE AND EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of the Employee

- All Employees of the GNWT are expected to self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms before coming to the worksite.
- Any Employee of the GNWT, regardless of vaccination status, who develops symptoms of COVID-19 should refrain from attending at their workplace and should promptly advise their direct supervisor.
- All Employees of the GNWT are expected to follow all Office of the Chief Public Health Officer (OCPHO) and Public Health orders.

Responsibilities of the Employer

- The Employer is responsible for informing in writing all employees in their department or agency of their requirements under the Policy and provisions of the Corporate Guidelines.
- In the event of changes to the corporate guidelines, the employer is responsible for informing in writing all affected employees at the earliest possible date.

LEGISLATIVE AND OTHER RELATED AUTHORITY

The Policy and these Guidelines are issued under the authority of the Financial Management Board. The *Public Service Act* and Regulations, and all relevant policies, and the terms and conditions of employment continue to apply.

Employees will agree to abide by all government/department policies, collective agreements, procedures and legislation, including, but not limited to, the confidentiality of clients, department information and documentation.

The Policy, these Guidelines, and all departmental and agency-specific guidelines are drafted and will be implemented in adherence to the *Access to Information Protection of Privacy Act*, the *Safety Act*, the *Human Rights Act*, and any other legislation, regulations, and policies referenced within the Policy, these Guidelines, or departmental and agency-specific guidelines or applicable to the Policy.